

THE DRAWING STUDIO'S "OUTREACH TO PLACE-BOUND SENIORS" PROGRAM

With financial assistance from the Compassion Capital Fund through the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona, TDS has initiated a tutorial program responsive to the individual learning needs and interests of seniors in assisted living homes, adult care, and senior centers.

Older people living in senior housing or served by senior centers often cannot easily access offerings at TDS because they have no transportation, or they are limited by physical or cognitive impairments. Yet these seniors may still have a keen interest in art—either because they pursued art professionally or avocationally when they were younger, or they have always wanted to engage in art practice of one sort or another. While the practice of visual art is an excellent way for place-bound seniors to stay connected with the world, unlike recreational art programs, our purpose is less therapeutic than artistic. We are not about keeping seniors “busy and occupied”; rather we target seniors with a serious interest in art, just as we target youth with a serious interest in art for our summer program, and connect them to a community of art practice.

TDS is currently recruiting both tutors and facilities to participate. Tutors are artists/students of art who have progressed in their own studies to the point where they feel comfortable working informally with small groups of seniors to encourage them in their efforts and guide them in their studies by designing individual assignments and projects. Tutors participate in professional development activities, including a workshop and monthly peer development and support meetings.

Tutors and sites are matched on the basis of interest and expertise, location, and group size. The tutor and site administrator meet and talk to make sure the “fit” is right for both parties. Initially, tutorials are scheduled for a two-hour period once a week, at a time to be determined by the individual tutor and site. This schedule can be modified by agreement between tutor, site administration, and participants.

Because we at TDS are building new partnerships and participating in the larger community in a new way, we ask tutors to make a volunteer commitment to the program of at least three months. Tutors will then receive \$15/hour for groups of 5 and under, and \$20/hour for groups over 5. To ensure continuity for participants in the program, we ask tutors to make a one-year commitment to the program. (Tutorials do not need to meet every week. Tutors can design vacation/holiday breaks that meet their needs and those of a particular site. We estimate tutors will probably meet around 40-45 weeks of the year. Tutors may also pair up at a site, as long as participants are comfortable with the arrangement.)

Similarly, we ask participating sites to make a commitment to TDS. We offer sites a free trial period. If, after that time, participants and site administrators decide our program has value, we ask that facilities or their residents (as appropriate) pay a fee between \$8 and \$15 per person per session (depending on group size). These fees help pay the tutor, purchase art supplies, and allow TDS to administer the program. We actively seek out opportunities to exhibit art by participants and tutors in program sites and in the larger community.

For more information about becoming a tutor or engaging a tutor to offer sessions at your facility, please contact TDS Executive Director Lynn Fleischman, 520.620.0947, director@thedrawingstudio.org.